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by local rules of court. This for the civil docket sheet. (SEE II	rm, approved by the Judicia	Conference of the Unite	ed States in	n September 1974, is requ	uired for the	use of the Clerk of	Court for the	aw, except as ne purpose of	provide
I. (a) PLAINTIFFS			Filit	DEFENDANTS	ν.				
KENNETH MILLS, on behalf of himself and all others similarly situated.  (b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff ALAMEDA				HSBC BANK NEVADA, N.A.; HSBC CARD SERVICES, INC.; HSBC MORTGAGE SERVICES, INC.; HSBC AUTO FINANCE, INC.; and HSBC CONSUMER LENDING (USA), INC.  County of Residence of First Listed Defendant					
(E	EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF C.	ASES)		NOTE:	IN LAND C	PLAINTIFF CASES ONDEMNATION OF LAND INVOL	CASES, USE	THE LOCATIO	)N OF
(c) Attorneys Firm Name LIEFF CABRASER HEIN 275 Battery St., 29th Floo San Francisco, CA 9411	Daniel M. Hutchin 415-956-1000			Attomeys (If Known)	1	2 4	01	O	$E_{ij}$
II. BASIS OF JURISD	ICTION (Place an "X"	' in One Box Only)	III. CI	TIZENSHIP OF P	RINCIPA	L PARTIES	(Place an "X"	' in One Box for	Plaintifi
J 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff	3 Federal Question (U.S. Government		(	(For Diversity Cases Only)	TF DEF	Incorporated or Pr	and One I	Box for Defended PTF  4	
U.S. Government Defendant	☐ 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizensh	ip of Parties in Item III)	Citize	n of Another State	2 🗇 2	Incorporated and F of Business In A		<b>J</b> 5	<b>X</b> 5
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IV. NATURE OF SUIT				1					
CONTRACT  1 110 Insurance 1 120 Marine 1 130 Miller Act 1 140 Negotiable Instrument 1 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment 1 151 Medicare Act 1 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excl. Veterans) 1 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits 1 160 Stockholders' Suits 1 190 Other Contract 1 195 Contract Product Liability 1 196 Franchise  REAL PROPERTY 1 210 Land Condemnation 1 220 Foreclosure 1 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment 1 240 Torts to Land 1 245 Tort Product Liability 1 290 All Other Real Property	PERSONAL INJURY  310 Airplane 315 Airplane Product Liability 320 Assault, Libel & Slander 330 Federal Employers' Liability 340 Marine 345 Marine Product Liability 350 Motor Vehicle Product Liability 360 Other Personal Injury 362 Personal Injury Med. Malpractice  CIVIL RIGHTS 440 Other Civil Rights 441 Voting 442 Employment 443 Housing/ Accommodations 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Employment 446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other  448 Education	PERSONAL INJURY  365 Personal Injury - Product Liability  367 Health Care/ Pharmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability  368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability  PERSONAL PROPER  370 Other Fraud  371 Truth in Lending  380 Other Personal Property Damage Product Liability  PRISONER PETITION  510 Motions to Vacate Sentence Habeas Corpus: 530 General 535 Death Penalty 540 Mandamus & Othe 550 Civil Rights 555 Prison Condition  560 Civil Detainee - Conditions of	7   623   690   710   720   740   751   791   791	CABOR  Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881  Other  LABOR  Fair Labor Standards Act Labor/Mgmt. Relations Railway Labor Act Family and Medical Leave Act Other Labor Litigation Empl. Ret. Inc. Security Act  IMMIGRATION Naturalization Application Habeas Corpus - Alien Detainee (Prisoner Petition) Other Immigration Actions	□ 422 Appe □ 423 With 28 U  PROPER □ 820 Copy □ 830 Paten □ 840 Trade  SOCIAL □ 861 BIA ( □ 862 Black □ 863 DIW ( □ 865 RSI (	SC 157  RTY RIGHTS rights t tmark  SECURITY (1395ff) Lung (923) C/DIWW (405(g)) Title XVI (405(g))  LTAX SUITS (U.S. Plaintiff efendant)	375 Fal  400 Sta  410 Ani  430 Bar  450 Cor  460 Dep  470 Rac  Cor  480 Cor  480 Cor  850 Sec  891 Agr  893 Env  895 Free  Acc  896 Arb  899 Adr  Act  Age  950 Cor	aks and Banking nmerce portation eketeer Influence rupt Organizations sumer Credit ble/Sat TV urities/Commodichange er Statutory Acticultural Acts ironmental Matedom of Informatic	ment g ded and ons dities/ stions tters ation cedure
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I. CAUSE OF ACTIO	N Brief description of c		***************************************	(Do not cite jurisdictional si	tatutes unless	diversity):			
II. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:		IS A CLASS ACTION		MAND \$		HECK YES only i	f demanded Yes		:
TIII. RELATED CASE IF ANY	(See instructions):	HIDGE			DOGU				

IX. DIVISIONAL ASSIGNMENT (Civil L.R. 3-2)

(Place an "X" in One Box Only) **▼** SAN FRANCISCO/OAKLA ND ☐ SAN JOSE

SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD

AND SORD LIEFF, CABRASER, HEIMANN & \_\_\_filing
BERNSTEIN, LLP Jonathan D. Selbin (State Bar No. 170222) 250 Hudson Street, 8th Floor 3 New York, NY 10013 Telephone: (212) 355-9500 Facsimile: (212) 355-9592 5 LIEFF, CABRASER, HEIMANN & MEYER WILSON CO., LPA BERNSTEIN, LLP Matthew R. Wilson 6 Daniel M. Hutchinson (State Bar No. 239458) (pro hac vice to be filed) Eduardo E. Santacana (State Bar No. 281668) 1320 Dublin Road, Ste. 100 7 275 Battery Street, 29th Floor Columbus, Ohio 43215 San Francisco, California 94111-3339 Telephone: (614) 224-6000 Telephone: (415) 956-1000 8 Facsimile: (614) 224-6066 Facsimile: (415) 956-1008 9 10 Attorneys for Plaintiff and the Proposed Class 11 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 12 NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA SAN FRANCISCO / OAKLAND DIVISION 13 14 KENNETH MILLS, on behalf of himself 15 and all others similarly situated, 16 Plaintiff, **CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT FOR** 17 DAMAGES AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF PURSUANT TO 47 U.S.C. § 227 ET SEQ. 18 HSBC BANK NEVADA, N.A.; HSBC (TELEPHONE CONSUMER CARD SERVICES, INC.; HSBC PROTECTION ACT) 19 MORTGAGE SERVICES, INC.; HSBC AUTO FINANCE, INC.; and HSBC **CLASS ACTION** 20 CONSUMER LENDING (USA), INC., **DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL** 21 Defendants. 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

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Plaintiff Kenneth Mills (hereinafter referred to as "Plaintiff"), individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated, alleges on personal knowledge, investigation of his counsel, and on information and belief as follows:

#### NATURE OF ACTION

- Plaintiff brings this action for damages, and other legal and equitable 1. remedies, resulting from the illegal actions of HSBC Bank Nevada, N.A., HSBC Card Services, Inc., HSBC Mortgage Services, Inc., HSBC Auto Finance, Inc., HSBC Consumer Lending (USA), Inc., and/or other affiliates or subsidiaries of HSBC Finance Corporation (all hereinafter referred to collectively as "HSBC") in negligently, knowingly, and/or willfully contacting Plaintiff and Class Members on their cellular telephones without their prior express consent within the meaning of the Telephone Consumer Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. § 227 et seq. (hereinafter referred to as the "TCPA"). HSBC has violated the TCPA by contacting Plaintiff and Class Members on their cellular telephones via an "automatic telephone dialing system," as defined by 47 U.S.C. § 227(a)(1), and/or by using "an artificial or prerecorded voice" as described in 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1)(A), without their prior express consent within the meaning of the TCPA.
- 2. Plaintiff brings this action for injunctive relief and statutory damages resulting from HSBC's illegal actions.

### JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- This matter in controversy exceeds \$5,000,000, as each member of the 3. proposed Class of tens of thousands is entitled to up to \$1,500.00 in statutory damages for each call that has violated the TCPA. Accordingly, this Court has jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1332(d)(2). Further, Plaintiff alleges a national class, which will result in at least one Class member belonging to a different state. Therefore, both elements of diversity jurisdiction under the Class Action Fairness Act of 2005 ("CAFA") are present, and this Court has jurisdiction. This Court also has federal question jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331.
- Venue is proper in the United States District Court for the Northern 4. District of California pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1391(b)-(c) and 1441(a), because Defendant is

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deemed to reside in any judicial district in which it is subject to personal jurisdiction at the time the action is commenced, and because Defendant's contacts with this District are sufficient to subject it to personal jurisdiction. Venue is also proper in this District because Plaintiff Mills has resided in this District at all times relevant to these claims such that a substantial part of the events giving rise to the claims occurred in this District.

#### **PARTIES**

- 5. Plaintiff Kenneth Mills is, and at all times mentioned herein was, an individual citizen of the State of California, who resides in Oakland, California.
- 6. Defendant HSBC Bank Nevada, N.A., is a national bank and a wholly owned subsidiary of HSBC Finance Corporation. HSBC Bank Nevada, N.A. is a Nevada company with principal places of business in Las Vegas, Nevada and New York City, New York.
- 7. Defendant HSBC Card Services, Inc. is the U.S. consumer credit card segment of HSBC. HSBC Card Services, Inc., is a Maryland company with a principal place of business in Illinois.
- 8. Defendant HSBC Mortgage Services, Inc. offers HSBC home loans and other mortgages to consumers. HSBC Mortgage Services, Inc. is a Delaware company.
- 9. Defendant HSBC Auto Finance, Inc. offers auto loans to consumers.
  HSBC Auto Finance, Inc. is a Delaware company.
- 10. Defendant HSBC Consumer Lending (USA), Inc. offers consumers credit accounts and loans. HSBC Consumer Lending (USA), Inc. is a Delaware company.
- 11. HSBC markets itself as "one of the industry's most valuable brands," and "one of the world's largest banking and financial services organisations [sic]." HSBC serves over 89 million customers across its Customer Groups and Global Businesses. It has offices in 85 countries and territories.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See http://www.hsbc.com/1/2/investor-relations/overview/fast-facts, last viewed on July 26, 2012.

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## THE TELEPHONE CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT OF 1991

#### (TCPA), 47 U.S.C. § 227

- 12. In 1991, Congress enacted the TCPA,<sup>2</sup> in response to a growing number of consumer complaints regarding certain telemarketing practices.
- 13. The TCPA regulates, among other things, the use of automated telephone equipment, or "autodialers." Specifically, the plain language of section 227(b)(1)(A)(iii) prohibits the use of autodialers to make any call to a wireless number in the absence of an emergency or the prior express consent of the called party.<sup>3</sup>
- 14. According to findings by the FCC, the agency Congress vested with authority to issue regulations implementing the TCPA, such calls are prohibited because, as Congress found, automated or prerecorded telephone calls are a greater nuisance and invasion of privacy than live solicitation calls, and such calls can be costly and inconvenient. The FCC also recognized that wireless customers are charged for incoming calls whether they pay in advance or after the minutes are used.<sup>4</sup>
- 15. On January 4, 2008, the FCC released a Declaratory Ruling wherein it confirmed that autodialed and prerecorded message calls to a wireless number by a creditor (or on behalf of a creditor) are permitted only if the calls are made with the "prior express consent" of the called party.<sup>5</sup> The FCC "emphasize[d] that prior express consent is deemed to be granted only if the wireless number was provided by the consumer to the creditor, and that such number was provided during the transaction that resulted in the debt owed."

<sup>6</sup> FCC Declaratory Ruling, 23 F.C.C.R. at 564-65 (¶ 10).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991, Pub. L. No. 102-243, 105 Stat. 2394 (1991), codified at 47 U.S.C. § 227 (TCPA). The TCPA amended Title II of the Communications Act of 1934, 47 U.S.C. § 201 et seq.

<sup>25 3 47</sup> U.S.C. § 227(b)(1)(A)(iii).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Rules and Regulations Implementing the Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991, CG Docket No. 02-278, Report and Order, 18 FCC Rcd 14014 (2003).
<sup>5</sup> In the Matter of Rules and Regulations Implementing the Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991 ("FCC Declaratory Ruling"), 23 F.C.C.R. 559, 23 FCC Rcd. 559, 43 Communications Reg. (P&F) 877, 2008 WL 65485 (F.C.C.) (2008).

## FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

- 16. At all times relevant, Plaintiff Mills was an individual residing in the State of California. Plaintiff Mills is, and at all times mentioned herein was, a "person" as defined by 47 U.S.C. § 153(39).
  - 17. In or around 2004, Plaintiff Mills took out a credit card with HSBC. Plaintiff Mills did not provide the cellular phone number that HSBC called on his credit card application. In fact, Plaintiff Mills did not even have his current cellular phone number in 2004.
  - 18. Plaintiff Mills has not subsequently provided Defendants with consent to contact him via his cellular phone number.
  - 19. Beginning in or around April 2012 and through the present, HSBC has repeatedly contacted Plaintiff Mills on his cellular telephone with an automated message. Mills received repeated, harassing calls at all hours of the day. Because these calls were prerecorded, Mills had no ability to request that the calls end or to voice his complaints to a real person.
  - 20. Although Plaintiff Mills requested that Defendants stop the calls, HSBC has continued to call his cellular phone.
- 21. HSBC is, and at all times mentioned herein was, a "person", as defined by 47 U.S.C. § 153(39).
- 22. All telephone contact by HSBC to Plaintiff on his cellular telephone occurred via an "automatic telephone dialing system," as defined by 47 U.S.C. § 227(a)(1), and/or used "an artificial or prerecorded voice" as described in 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1)(A).
- 23. The telephone number that HSBC used to contact Plaintiff, with an "artificial or prerecorded voice" made by an "automatic telephone dialing system," was assigned to a cellular telephone service as specified in 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1)(A)(iii).

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT

<sup>7</sup> See FCC Declaratory Ruling, 23 F.C.C.R. at 564-65 (¶ 10).

<sup>8</sup> See FCC Declaratory Ruling, 23 F.C.C.R. at 565 (¶ 10).

All persons within the United States who received a non-emergency telephone call from HSBC to a cellular telephone through the use of an automatic telephone dialing system or an artificial or prerecorded voice and who did not provide prior express consent for such calls during the transaction that resulted in the debt owed.

Collectively, all these persons will be referred to as "Class members." Plaintiff represents, and is a member of, the Class. Excluded from the Class are HSBC and any entities in which HSBC has a controlling interest, HSBC's agents and employees, any Judge to whom this action is assigned and any member of such Judge's staff and immediate family, and claims for personal injury, wrongful death and/or emotional distress.

- 32. Plaintiff does not know the exact number of members in the Class, but based upon the representations of HSBC as to its market share, Plaintiff reasonably believes that Class members number at minimum in the tens of thousands.
- 33. Plaintiff and all members of the Class have been harmed by the acts of HSBC.
  - 34. This Class Action Complaint seeks injunctive relief and money damages.
- 35. The joinder of all Class members is impracticable due to the size and relatively modest value of each individual claim. The disposition of the claims in a class action will provide substantial benefit to the parties and the Court in avoiding a multiplicity of identical suits. The Class can be identified easily through records maintained by HSBC.
- 36. There are well defined, nearly identical, questions of law and fact affecting all parties. The questions of law and fact involving the class claims predominate over questions which may affect individual Class members. Those common questions of law and fact include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - a. Whether HSBC made non-emergency calls to Plaintiff and Class members' cellular telephones using an automatic telephone dialing system or an artificial or prerecorded voice;
  - b. Whether HSBC can meet its burden of showing it obtained prior express consent (*i.e.*, consent that is clearly and unmistakably stated), during the transaction that resulted in the debt owed, to make such calls;
    - c. Whether HSBC's conduct was knowing and/or willful;

- d. Whether HSBC is liable for damages, and the amount of such damages; and
- e. Whether HSBC should be enjoined from engaging in such conduct in the future.
- 37. As a person who received numerous and repeated telephone calls using an automatic telephone dialing system or an artificial or prerecorded voice, without his prior express consent within the meaning of the TCPA, Plaintiff asserts claims that are typical of each Class member. Plaintiff will fairly and adequately represent and protect the interests of the Class, and has no interests which are antagonistic to any member of the Class.
- 38. Plaintiff has retained counsel experienced in handling class action claims involving violations of federal and state consumer protection statutes, including claims under the TCPA.
- 39. A class action is the superior method for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy. Class wide relief is essential to compel HSBC to comply with the TCPA. The interest of Class members in individually controlling the prosecution of separate claims against HSBC is small because the statutory damages in an individual action for violation of the TCPA are small. Management of these claims is likely to present significantly fewer difficulties than are presented in many class claims because the calls at issue are all automated and the Class members, by definition, did not provide the prior express consent required under the statute to authorize calls to their cellular telephones.
- 40. HSBC has acted on grounds generally applicable to the Class, thereby making final injunctive relief and corresponding declaratory relief with respect to the Class as a whole appropriate. Moreover, on information and belief, Plaintiff alleges that the TCPA violations complained of herein are substantially likely to continue in the future if an injunction is not entered.

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#### **CAUSES OF ACTION**

#### **FIRST COUNT**

## KNOWING AND/OR WILLFUL VIOLATIONS OF THE TELEPHONE CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT, 47 U.S.C. § 227 ET SEQ.

- 41. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the foregoing paragraphs of this Complaint as if fully stated herein.
- 42. The foregoing acts and omissions of HSBC constitute numerous and multiple knowing and/or willful violations of the TCPA, including but not limited to each of the above-cited provisions of 47 U.S.C. § 227 et seq.
- 43. As a result of HSBC's knowing and/or willful violations of 47 U.S.C. § 227 *et seq.*, Plaintiff and each member of the Class is entitled to treble damages of up to \$1,500.00 for each and every call in violation of the statute, pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3).
- 44. Plaintiff and all Class members are also entitled to and do seek injunctive relief prohibiting such conduct violating the TCPA by HSBC in the future. Plaintiff and Class members are also entitled to an award of attorneys' fees and costs.

#### **SECOND COUNT**

# VIOLATIONS OF THE TELEPHONE CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT 47 U.S.C. $\S$ 227 ET SEQ.

- 45. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the foregoing paragraphs of this Complaint as if fully set forth herein.
- 46. The foregoing acts and omissions of HSBC constitute numerous and multiple violations of the TCPA, including but not limited to each of the above cited provisions of 47 U.S.C. § 227 et seq.
- 47. As a result of HSBC's violations of 47 U.S.C. § 227 *et seq.*, Plaintiff and Class members are entitled to an award of \$500.00 in statutory damages for each and every call in violation of the statute, pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3)(B).
- 48. Plaintiff and Class members are also entitled to and do seek injunctive relief prohibiting HSBC's violation of the TCPA in the future.

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1	49.	Plaintiff and Class members are also entitled to an award of attorneys'		
2	fees and costs.			
3		PRAYER FOR RELIEF		
4	WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests that the Court grant Plaintiff and all			
5	Class members the following relief against Defendant:			
6	A.	Injunctive relief prohibiting such violations of the TCPA by HSBC in the		
7	future;			
8	В.	As a result of HSBC's willful and/or knowing violations of 47 U.S.C.		
9	§ 227(b)(1), Plaintiff's	eeks for himself and each Class member treble damages, as provided by		
10	statute, of up to \$1,500.00 for each and every call that violated the TCPA;			
11	C.	As a result of HSBC's violations of 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1), Plaintiff seeks		
12	for himself and each Class member \$500.00 in statutory damages for each and every call that			
13	violated the TCPA;			
14	D.	An award of attorneys' fees and costs to counsel for Plaintiff and the Class;		
15	E.	An order certifying this action to be a proper class action pursuant to		
16	Federal Rule of Civil I	Procedure 23, establishing an appropriate Class and any Subclasses the		
17	Court deems appropria	ate, finding that Plaintiff is a proper representative of the Class, and		
18	appointing the lawyers	and law firms representing Plaintiff as counsel for the Class;		
19	F.	Such other relief as the Court deems just and proper.		
20				
21	Dated: July 30, 2012	By: <u>/s/ Jonathan D. Selbin</u> Jonathan D. Selbin		
22				
23		LIEFF, CABRASER, HEIMANN & BERNSTEIN, LLP Jonathan D. Selbin		
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11	At	ttorneys for Plaintiff Mills and the Proposed Class
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1		AND FOR JURY TRIAL
2	Plaintiff demands a trial	by jury on all counts so triable.
3	Dated: July 30, 2012	By: <u>/s/ Jonathan D. Selbin</u> Jonathan D. Selbin
4	•	Jonathan D. Selbin
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